



FRANÇOIS LARUELLE 2022-02-05

## DEMOCRACY OF-THE-LAST-INSTANCE WITHIN THE SCIENCES: GENERAL EQUIVALENCY AND GENERIC IDEMPOTENCY

GENERICSCIENCE,  
PHILOFICTION

DEMOCRACY, EQUIVALENCY, IDEMPOTENCY, NON-LARUELLE,  
NON-PHILOSOPHY, QUANTUM PHYSICS

**Democracy of-the-Last-Instance Within the Sciences: General Equivalency and Generic Idempotency**

François Laruelle

In *Introduction aux sciences génériques* (Paris: Éditions Pétra, 2008), p.97-104.

1) Many philosophers love to mock “democracy,” a theme that is either idealist or political [*politicien*] or popular, those who keep lying about “their” concept of democracy, putting their statement and enunciation in contradiction, or again its destination and concept in contradiction, and those who have not understood the scope of Determination-in-the-Last-Instance. How could they not make their equality a subject of mockery because they could only imagine it as auto-equalization or, rather, *the general equivalency of the surplus-value of sufficiency*? Democracy cannot, without contradicting itself, be the object of a position within philosophy and can only be doctrinal or theoreticist, rather than really determined by Man-in-person. *General equivalency has as its sole adversary generic idempotency: generic idempotency implies the transformation of general equivalency, general equivalency implies the negation or repression of generic idempotency*. The philosopher who makes a political theory of democracy is like the celebrated liar who says that they lie. By being an object of a philosophical position or decision, democracy becomes auto-contradictory, and the subject of the democratic enunciation contradicts the subject of the statement and dominates them again. In the best of cases, both determine or reciprocally presuppose one another, but it is always the subject of the philosophical enunciation of democracy which is found to have primacy, and the philosophical subject is found to be in the position of the Real.

2) Man-in-person is the generic equality of the Unequal [*Inégaux*] who or which [*qui*] determine in-the-last-equality the inequalities which form the fabric of history and transform them. Equality is never effective: the world is that of *dissimilitudo*; but equality is real and transforms the relations which are always relations of inequality, making them lose their sufficiency without necessarily destroying them. Democracy of-the-last-instance could rather after all be called “communism,” subtracting from the latter any historical precipitation, as much as spontaneism – if the “common” of communism was understood as the generic, and if communism was understood as the generic constant of history.

3) What does establishing democracy in the sciences and for example among rival theories mean? This makes no sense epistemologically. We must cross the generic threshold to accept this thesis: from the fundamental/regional philosophical division [*découpage*] to its materialist and anti-democratic variant, by passing through the criteria of competition among theories or suitors [*prétendants*] to truth who rule the problem through verification, falsification, anarchism, or other procedures like consensus – what rules is the forgetting of their radical human presupposed. Hence, a suspected equation between science and democracy, with its weak liberal form or its sociological form science = consensus. Science is conceived as a relation of exteriority (science contributes towards the establishment of democracy across the planet), at best a relation of interiority (science helps the proletariat), but it is always the relation of two worldly subjects, a duality accompanied by the phantasm of their unity, because it suffices to place Man in the position of the presupposed irreducible to the subjects of sciences so the intimate relations of science and democracy are tied much more tightly but also more freely even within a generic practice of sciences without, however, it being a positive intervention. Rather, it is a determination in-the-last-instance of these relations (or unilaterations). If Man-in-person is the univocal presupposed of all possible subjects, science and democracy and science and politics

would be identical but in-the-last-instance alone, and only maintain relations of “comradeship” [*compagnonage*] on this basis of their univocal determination.

We went from epistemo-logical difference as the maximal illusion (or hallucination) to re-organize the democratic relations in-the-last-instance within the “population” of theories. It is Man as Lived-in-person who ultimately defines the equal or democratic distribution of knowledges and the epistemology attached to it; this is because Man is not a border but the One-in-One totaled [*additionné*] (to) themselves or idempotent. Generic democracy consists here, as we have already suggested, in transforming the relations of the philosophical reciprocal capture, domination and re-appropriation but also the attempts of scientific rebellion. Capture, like hybridization [*métissage*], crossbreeding [*croisement*], and grafting are biological and bellicose interpretations in which each adversary seeks to make an artificial identity by whatever means. We do not deny the reality and perhaps the inevitability of this war within theories, and which does not stop by its communicational digestion. *Yet it is theoretically impossible to generalize it on all the levels of research. Perhaps there is an invisible and at any rate secret point where the relations are pacified...an omission of relations where there are no longer epistemological relations, where the Real has primacy.* The point is not therefore to pacify the relations between territories by preventing the superseding of the border but by transforming, wherever it is possible, the bilateral borders into unilateral borders, where this transformation is without return to a primitive confusion, without confounding this transformation with a withdrawal, a stoppage, or a unilateral decision in the restrained political sense.

4) To relate the ensemble of knowledge in its diversity to Man as to relate to those who are neither its object nor its subject but rather its univocal presupposed, or rather to bring Man a priori, is obviously to assume dissolved the immemorial confusion of Man and subjects, the presupposed and the agents, the cause and the operations. The Copernican Revolution as the acosmic liberation of the subject of sciences and science as a subject has reenforced the deepening confusion of Man with the subject of science. Even though the theme is either forgotten or mocked sometimes by philosophers, we still live in this false and contradictory liberation of the positive sciences by the Absolute Subjectivity which consumes the forgetting of their human presupposed. It is useless to specify the conservative character of this conception which submits the sciences to the philosophical order and subjugates them by their own rebellion against this order, subjugating them to an epistemological war with no exit. Democracy “among” the knowledges is a generic decision or a decision of the *Mi-lieu*. It does not concern their tautological equality or their abstract equalization by the sign of the Whole, but their human equality or their univocity of-the-last-instance, such that it leaves each to their operative techniques and their use of others.

5) The only decision which does what it says and says what it does, but that acts and says in-the-last-instance alone, is that of a subject *practicing, on the basis of a priori axioms*, philosophical democracy as an occasion to transform in this requisition. Democracy will truly be universal even in the sciences and not only in the rest of society when it will be an axiom of equality in the sciences rather than a concept or a theorem that we develop once and for all concerning

democracy in general, a theorem that philosophers habitually make because they for axioms of their thought what is realistically only theorems. This axiom can be stated in several ways: *there are no democratic relations, democracy is not a relation but a non-relation, if democracy is real it is not, there is something of epistemological democracy but it is not real*. We must reclaim and transform the philosophical concepts and forms of democracy, but they themselves are not real. Man-in-person is foreclosed to them and determines them through this being-foreclosed. Another more elementary axiom is precisely that Man-in-person is foreclosed to any democracy but determines a real democracy in-the-last-instance.

6) What is the furthest effect of the constitution of an abstract "thought-science" still said more simply as a "science of philosophy," subtracted from epistemology, also called for this reason a "non-epistemology"? The positive sciences and positive philosophies simultaneously receive the status as "symptoms" of this thought-science and "models" for its interpretation. Democracy in the sciences or in theory is by this very fact a problem that is still distinct from the improbable democracy in scientific research which is done voluntarily or not under the philosophical horizon. It finds the principle of its solution in the parallel generic "reduction" of positive sciences and spontaneous philosophies in the state of "models." And it is realized not from discipline to discipline by through the mediation of a modeling of this abstract discipline, non-epistemology. In order to make the positive sciences and positive epistemologies the interpretive models of generic thought-science, we must first not reverse epistemology but invert its terms, to grant the before-priority to science over epistemology. In this way, we "formalize" a non-epistemology which gives the if not tendential, at least abstract, nonhistorical dimension for the disciplines which interpret it. The method is fundamentally anti-empiricist, even though it employs an "occasionalist" empiricism of philosophy. Nor is it simply deductive, but it is a unilateral axiomatic and includes the unified deductive and inductive phases.

Thus, we will have an equality of coupled terms of dualities but each of them with their own function, an equality without confusion nor identification. Equality in-the-last-instance respects the specificity of each discipline or each of these knowledges which are our only and unique object. As for the particular or singular being, it is the correlate of the Philosophical Whole and suffers its law. The "singularity" or "event" of the contemporaries are moments torn or subtracted from the Whole and are therefore no longer our object. There is a Universal *Mi-lieu* which is not "between" the Whole and the singularity but crosses both. It is rather "in" the generic constant that something real happens: knowledges or practices which concern the subjects. The generic a priori is the true and first universal that has some chance of being relatively independent from the philosophical which nevertheless claims to give the image of any possible universal, but is in reality the image of any possible domination, while the generic is still the real universal, coinciding with Man-in-person, and which is no longer traced from the Super-Whole.

translated by Jeremy R. Smith

taken from here

Foto: Sylvia John

[← PREVIOUS](#) [NEXT →](#)

---

## META

[CONTACT](#)

[FORCE-INC/MILLE PLATEAUX](#)

[IMPRESSUM](#)

[DATENSCHUTZERKLÄRUNG](#)

## TAXONOMY

[CATEGORIES](#)

[TAGS](#)

[AUTHORS](#)

[ALL INPUT](#)

## SOCIAL

[FACEBOOK](#)

[INSTAGRAM](#)

[TWITTER](#)